



A Study of Problems and Obstacles in Learning Japanese Language of Undergraduate Students in Private University

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were 1) To investigate problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language of undergraduate students in private university 2) to compare problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language of the students according to gender, faculty and academic year, and 3) to compile opinions and suggestions of the student.

The samples were 200 undergraduate students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology during first semester of 2017 academic year which derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire. The data were statistically analyzed by mean scores, standard deviation, percentage and t-test and F-test.

The results were as follows;

1. TNI students had problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language at a moderate level.
2. TNI students with different genders had no differences at 0.05 level in total and in each aspect.
3. TNI students with different academic years had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in total and each aspect.
4. TNI students with different faculties had statistically significant differences in total at 0.05 level. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in problems in reading skills.
5. TNI students had supplemental suggestions as following; TNI should have more courses focused on Japanese for Specific Purposes such as Writing or Reading in Japanese; Teaching materials should be varieties such as comic, movie and song; and Presentation in Japanese should be arranged in every class.

Keywords: Problems and Obstacles, Learning Japanese

1. Introduction

Language is a very significant means of communication as it is very difficult to think of a society without language. It improves people's thoughts which guides and controls their total activity. In other words, it is a transporter of civilization and culture (Lucas, 1984).

Currently, technology, information and knowledge explosion have controlled to the increase of teaching and learning Japanese as a second language. Teaching and learning Japanese in different countries have been faced with some problems. Japanese has been taught in university in Thailand since many years ago. Although the students spend a long time in Japanese language classes, they do not achieve language skills in a desirable level and they are not able to say some Japanese sentences (Horwitz, 1991).

In addition to (Mitchell and Myles, 1998), it is stated that teachers and students have lost their time and costs and most learners have not used their valuable life in learning Japanese and as a result it has had opposing effects on people's lives. So it can be believed that Japanese teaching has a pretty aspect and it has no academic significances. According to many studies about the problems of Japanese teaching and learning It was found that there were basic Japanese skills in learning such as listening, speaking, reading writing. In cases where Japanese is taught as a second language, there is no opportunity to use the skills in the classroom due to lacking of Japanese native speakers in the classroom.

In conclusion, Japanese language will be considered as an important subject. College of General Education and Languages focuses on teaching Japanese language to all students from three faculties such as Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Information of technology, Faculty of Business Administration. According to Japanese instruction, it is found that there are not research about studying of problems and obstacles in Japanese classes. Therefore, researcher study

Research Purpose

1. To investigate problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language of undergraduate students in private university.
2. To compare problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language of the students according to gender, faculty and academic year; and
3. To compile opinions and suggestions of the student.



2. Methodology

Population and samples

Population of this study was 500 TNI students in the first semester of 2017 academic year.

Samples in this study were 200 TNI students in the first semester of 2017 academic year derived through simple random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, based on problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language of undergraduate students in private university.

Data collection

Problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language were accessed through the questionnaire in the first semester of 2017 academic year.

Data Analysis

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented in a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1987) as follows:

1.00 $\leq \bar{x} < 1.50$ refers to the lowest problems and obstacles

1.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 2.50$ refers to the low problems and obstacles

2.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 3.50$ refers to moderate problems and obstacles

3.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 4.50$ refers to high problems and obstacles

4.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 5.00$ refers to highest problems and obstacles

3. Results

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1 The results of demographic variable of TNI undergraduate students

The analysis of the data from the students' questionnaire reported by TNI undergraduate students in the 2017 academic year is presented in the 2 section deals with the demographic variables from the students' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire: genders, academic years and faculties as following table.

Table 1: Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	n=200	Percentage
1. Genders		
1.1 Male	107	53.2
1.2 Female	93	46.8
Total	200	100
2. Academic Years		
1st Year	0	0
2nd Year	59	29.4
3rd Year	75	37.8
4th Year	66	32.8
Total	200	100
3. Faculties		
Engineering	23	11.9
Information Technology	60	29.9
Business Administration	116	57.7
Total	200	100

Table showed that percentages of TNI undergraduate respondents in genders ranged from 53.2% for male and 46.8% for female; in academic years ranged from 29.4% for 2nd year, 37.8% for 3rd year and 32.8% for 4th year; in faculties ranged from 11.9% for Engineering, 29.7% for Information Technology, 57.7% for Business Administration.

Phase 2 problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language

Table 2: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language in total and each aspect

Components	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level
1.Problems in listening skills	2.72	0.84	Moderate
2.Problems in speaking skills	2.99	0.90	Moderate
3.Problems in reading skills	3.00	0.91	Moderate
4.Problems in writing skills	3.17	0.95	Moderate
5. Obstacles	2.70	0.84	Moderate
Total	2.91	0.72	Moderate

The table above indicated that TNI students had a moderate level of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language in overall (\bar{x} =2.91). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had a high level of Writing skills, Reading skills, Speaking skills, Listening skills and Obstacles (\bar{x} =3.17, \bar{x} =3.00, \bar{x} =2.99, \bar{x} =2.72 and \bar{x} =2.70) respectively.

Phase 3 The results of the comparison of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language according to genders, academic years, and faculties

Table 3: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language according to genders

Components	Male (M) n=107		Female (F) n=93		t	p
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.		
1. Problems in listening skills	2.78	.72	2.65	.89	1.04	.10
2. Problems in speaking skills	3.04	.86	2.94	.94	.78	.12
3. Problems in reading skills	2.95	.91	3.07	.92	-.95	.69
4. Problems in writing skills	3.16	.95	3.18	.96	-.16	.82
5. Obstacles	2.76	.80	2.63	.89	1.08	.18
Total	2.94	.70	2.88	.76	.52	.23

TNI students with different genders had no differences in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there was no difference.

Table 4: Table of comparison of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language according to academic years

Components	SS	df	MS	F	p
1.Problems in listening skills					
Between groups	1.633	2	.816	1.154	.318
Within groups	139.368	197	.707		
Total	141.000	199			
2. Problems in speaking skills					
Between groups	.916	2	.458	.562	.571
Within groups	160.377	197	.814		
Total	161.293	199			
3 .Problems in reading skills					
Between groups	3.435	2	1.718	2.058	.130
Within groups	164.428	197	.835		
Total	167.864	199			
4. Problems in writing skills					
Between groups	4.615	2	2.307	2.553	.080
Within groups	178.020	197	.904		
Total	182.635	199			
5. Obstacles					
Between groups	4.201	2	2.100	2.987	.053
Within groups	138.519	197	.703		
Total	142.720	199			
Total					
Between groups	1.141	2	.570	1.073	.344
Within groups	104.726	197	.532		
Total	105.866	199			

* Statistical significance at 0.05 level

The table showed that TNI students with different academic years had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in total and each aspect.

Table 5: Table of comparison of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language according to faculties

Components	SS	df	MS	F	p
1.Problems in listening skills					
Between groups	1.32	3	.443	.621	.602
Within groups	139.67	196	.713		
Total	141.00	199			
2.Problems in speaking skills					
Between groups	5.66	3	1.88	2.37	.071
Within groups	155.6	196	.794		
Total	161.29	199			
3.Problems in reading skills					
Between groups	7.40	3	2.46	3.01	.031*
Within groups	160.46	196	.819		
Total	167.86	199			
4.Problems in writing skills					
Between groups	6.59	3	2.19	2.44	.065
Within groups	176.04	196	.898		
Total	182.63	199			
5.Obstacles					
Between groups	4.02	3	1.34	1.894	.132
Within groups	138.69	196	.708		
Total	142.72	199			
Total					
Between groups	3.94	3	1.31	2.527	.059
Within groups	101.92	196	.520		
Total	105.86	199			

The table showed that students with different faculties had statistically significant differences in total at 0.05 level in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in problems in reading skills. For the rest, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level.



Phase 4 The results of opinions and suggestions strategies of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students

TNI students had supplemental suggestions as following:

1. TNI should have more courses focused on Japanese for Specific Purposes such as Writing or Reading in Japanese.
2. Teaching materials should be varieties such as comic, movie and song.
3. I need more Japanese environment. This can be in a form of announcement in Japanese or Japanese club.
4. Expression in Japanese should be taught more.
5. Presentation in Japanese should be arranged in every class.

4. Conclusions

According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were concluded as follows:

1. The percentages of TNI undergraduate respondents in genders ranged from 53.2% for male and 46.8% for female; in academic years ranged from 29.4% for 2nd year, 37.8% for 3rd year and 32.8% for 4th year; in faculties ranged from 11.9% for Engineering, 29.7% for Information Technology, 57.7% for Business Administration.
2. TNI students had a moderate level of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese language in overall ($\bar{x}=2.91$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had a high level of Writing skills, Reading skills , Speaking skills , Listening skills and Obstacles ($\bar{x}=3.17$, $\bar{x}=3.00$, $\bar{x}=2.99$, $\bar{x}=2.72$ and $\bar{x}=2.70$) respectively.
3. TNI students with different genders had no differences in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there was no difference.

4. TNI students with different academic years had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in total and each aspect.
5. TNI students with different faculties had statistically significant differences in total at 0.05 level in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in problems in reading skills.
6. TNI students had supplemental suggestions as following:
 - 6.1 TNI should have more courses focused on Japanese for Specific Purposes such as Writing or Reading in Japanese.
 - 6.2 Teaching materials should be varieties such as comic, movie and song.
 - 6.3 I need more Japanese environment. This can be in a form of announcement in Japanese or Japanese club.
 - 6.4 Expression in Japanese should be taught more.
 - 6.5 Presentation in Japanese should be arranged in every class.

5. Discussions

According to results, it showed that TNI students had a moderate level of problems and obstacles in learning Japanese. It might be because TNI students had problems in learning language about linguistic problems, sociocultural in second language learning, barriers in intercultural communication and learning strategies which related the notion of Mitchell and Myles (1998) who advocated that language problems are based on a number of variables including the following aspects; linguistic problems, sociocultural on second language learning, barriers to intercultural communication, learning strategies, and differences in educational systems and backgrounds.

Moreover, communication anxiety is very important to be obstacles in learning Japanese because TNI students focus of communication in Japanese in second language learning which related to the concept of Daly (1991) who stipulated that communication anxiety is a significant affectivity role in second language learning. In addition, the communication apprehension and problems encountered with oral communication in second language classrooms. Therefore, fear or anxiety is the obstacle of communication. There are not only the communication apprehension problems, but also writing apprehension and listening comprehension problems related to the foreign language learning.



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